

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT ! MORE LIGHT !" — Goethe.

"WHATEVER DOTH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT." — Paul.

No. 958.—VOL. XIX. [Registered as]

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1899.

[a Newspaper.]

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

'LIGHT' AND THE LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

We beg to remind the Subscribers to 'Light,' and the Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited, who have not already renewed their Subscriptions for 1899, which are payable *in advance*, that they should forward remittances at once to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Their kind attention to this matter will save much trouble in sending out accounts, booking, postage, &c.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Some anxious and well-meaning soul has sent us a new pamphlet, 'The truth about Spiritualism. By one who has investigated it.' The writer is abundantly convinced of the phenomena and has no patience with the absurd people who call them delusion or fraud. He admits also that he found Spiritualists were 'not superstitious women and weak-minded men, but hard-headed men and exceedingly intelligent women.'

But he had the good fortune, he thinks, to come under the influence of a Catholic priest, who very soon unveiled to him the secret of it all. Of course, one word explains it:—*Devil*. So, then, Spiritualism is 'the latest device of the Evil One, to subvert the faith of the good.' It is true that it puzzles him to comprehend how God can permit it, so that only evil spirits get at us: but the Catholic priest says it is all right, and so it must be.

As for these 'hard-headed men and exceedingly intelligent women,' they are on the road to hell. It may seem hard, but it is so. Did not God damn a world because Eve ate an apple? he asks. Why, then, should He not send to hell those who 'disregard the teachings of the Bible and the Church,' and 'give themselves up to the forbidden pursuits of Necromancy and Spiritualism?'

The writer of this tract tells us that he is the author of a tale, called 'Two Brothers.' He says:—

The Story concludes with the end of the World, and whilst the fate of the one Brother, who is a Christian, is a happy one, the fate of the other Brother, who is a Spiritualist, and Unbeliever, is a most miserable one. In other words, whilst the one Brother goes to Heaven, the other Brother goes to Hell. The Story finishes off at this point but is taken up again in another narrative, now ready, and shortly to be published, entitled, 'In the next World.' In this little work the author describes the experiences of John, the Christian, in Heaven, and Stuart, the Spiritualist and Unbeliever, in Hell.

It gives us no sort of gratification to print this morbid nonsense; but it is our duty to chronicle such things, if only that we may all have the material for comprehending certain states of mind.

Occasionally, we see a very beautiful passage quoted from Victor Hugo, on the life immortal: but it is nearly always quoted imperfectly. Here is the passage entire:—

Man is an infinitely small copy of God. That is glory enough for me. I am a man, an invisible atom, a drop in the ocean, a grain of sand on the shore. But, little as I am, I feel that God is in me, because I can bring forth out of my chaos. I make books, which are creations. I feel in *myself* the future life. I am like a forest which has been more than once cut down; the new shoots are stronger than ever. I know I am rising toward the sky. The sunshine is on my head. The earth gives me its generous sap, but Heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is only the result of our bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart. There I breathe at this moment the fragrance of the lilacs, the violets, and the roses, as twenty years ago. The nearer I approach the end, the more plainly I hear the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me.

It is marvellous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, and yet it is historic. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode and song. I have tried all, but I feel that I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave, I can say, like many others, I have finished my day's work; but I cannot say I have finished my life. My days will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley, it is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight to open on the dawn.

This, by Gerald Massey, concerning the value of Spiritualism, both for religion and for life, is well worth remembering:—

It has been for me, in common with many others, such a lifting of the mental horizon and a letting in of the heavens—such a formation of faith into facts—that I can only compare life without it to sailing on board ship with hatches battered down and being kept a prisoner, living by the light of a candle, and then suddenly on some splendid starry night allowed to go on deck for the first time to see the stupendous mechanism of the heavens all aglow with the glory of God.

Do we steadily enough impress upon the inner self the, perhaps, most blessed truth of our sublime faith,—that what we call 'death' is as natural, as beautiful, as winsome as what we call 'life': and more so? We feel the perfect truth of Ignatius Donnelly's fine thoughts on this central truth:—

No man should fear death any more than he fears life. One is as natural and necessary as the other. We did not select the hour of our coming nor will we the time of departure. We did not step from nothing into being nor will we from being into nothing. The call boy summons us on the stage to play that part which the great dramatist has assigned us; and when we have spoken our piece we disappear. By the measure of the geologic periods the individual life is but an electrical flash—a dot of light—in a continuous message reaching from everlasting to everlasting. Only one thing is certain, and that is, God. And continuity is part of God, and hence immortality is necessary because we are an output of God, and that which is of God cannot terminate. We suffer coming into the world and we suffer going out of it—but the child remembers not its pangs, nor will the dead. Teach your children to face death as they face life—with fearless but reverent spirit, remembering the tremendousness of the Divine force and the absolute littleness of everything else.

People are continually saying: 'If your spirits are

always near you, and if they can communicate with you, why do they not prevent this and that misery ?'

We do not pretend that it is easy to answer this. All we know is that they sometimes do prevent misery,—and, alas ! they sometimes lead into it. But how do we know that misery is not in the Programme ?—in the quite inevitable and even blessed Programme ? Who has told us that we are here only to be happy ? Carlyle's scornful saying has deep meaning in it :—' Foolish soul ! What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy ? . . . What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy ? Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to eat ?'

But what of Jesus Christ, and the manger, the mountain, Gethsemane, and the cross ? What if the process, for ourselves or others, needs it all ? He was wise who said : ' God does not take away the Red Sea, nor the wilderness, nor Jordan, but goes with us through them all—a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.'

' A new reader' asks what we regard as essential in relation to Religion. We rather hesitate. One cannot withhold at least the tribute of a respectful smile from the queer procession of notions which have done duty for the mainstays of Religion. We need not name them. Most people know them :—here a bit of ritual, and there a magical phrase or two ; here a text, and there a quaint old-world doctrine ; here a ceremony, and there a comfortable little plan of salvation, just sufficient to ' make *my* calling and election sure.' A goodly number of stories exist concerning the proprietors of these notions. The one we like the best relates to the days of Emerson and W. H. Channing.

A certain devout old lady became confused with the new thoughts of Transcendentalism and the havoc they made of her venerable beliefs. In the end, she said : ' I don't care so much about predestination and free will, and all that sort of thing ; but, if they take away my total depravity, I shall feel as though I hadn't any religion at all.'

But we do not like to entirely refuse to reply, or to seem frivolous. For our own part, we have always found all we want in Matthew xxii. 34-40.

It is quite necessary for our sensitives to remember that they may make mistakes. There is a middle path between the Theosophist's aversion to ' mere mediumship' and the conclusion which some Spiritualists appear to cherish, that all which comes from the unseen is to be believed and to be taken at its own valuation. That middle path is indicated by common-sense, which suggests that we ' try the spirits' and ' prove all things.' Here is a story to the point :—

A good old lady said to her nephew, a poor preacher : ' James, why did you enter the ministry ?' ' Because I was called,' he answered. ' James,' said the old lady, anxiously, as she looked up from wiping her spectacles, ' are you sure it wasn't some other noise you heard ?'

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A social meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance was held on Thursday, May 11th, in the Banqueting Hall, St. James's Hall, and was very largely attended. The feature of the evening was an interesting address by Mrs. Bessie Russell-Davies, in the course of which she narrated some of her most notable experiences as a medium. We have a long report in hand, but regret to say that owing to the exigencies of space, we are obliged to defer its publication till next week.

NEW YORK, U.S.A.—' LIGHT' may be obtained from Messrs. Brentano, 31, Union-square.

OCCULTISTS' DEFENCE LEAGUE.

A League is now in course of formation for the purpose of protecting palmists, astrologers, and mediums, ' who are honestly and discreetly carrying on their professions,' from the prosecutions to which they are subject owing to the ignorance and bigotry of magistrates and police ; and a preliminary meeting of supporters of the movement was held on the evening of the 9th inst. in the drawing-room of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Leo, 9, Lyncroft-gardens, London, N.W.

The President, Mr. W. A. Bishop-Culpeper, barrister-at-law, said that he understood the objects of the League were (1) to afford legal aid to those who were wrongly prosecuted ; (2) to promote a study of occultism ; and (3) to expose those who were found to be fraudulent practitioners. These were the primary objects, and with these all present must be in sympathy. Lately there had been several prosecutions, and ' The Queen v. Entwistle' was quoted, commenting upon which Mr. Bishop-Culpeper said that if this case were allowed to remain unchallenged, no astrologer, palmist, or medium would be safe. As the law stands, no occultist in England or Wales is safe. He could not say this of Scotland, thanks to the judges' liberality and breadth of mind. There they were safe ; so that at present we had one administration of the law in Scotland, and another in England. This was nothing short of a scandal. After commenting upon the wording of the Act, which said nothing about taking money, he remarked that it was illegal to profess to foretell the future, or tell fortunes, whether by word of mouth or by writing ; and this being the case, it was surprising that some of the public journals were not proceeded against. He mentioned one high-class paper, and said that the proprietor, who allowed palmistry, would, according to the Vagrancy Act, if convicted, be called an incorrigible rogue and a vagabond, be sent to prison, and might even be called up for sentence again ; and there was also a provision in the case of males, that they should be whipped. The President did not know if this proprietor (whose name was mentioned) would like a whipping, but it was plain that he was liable. According to the Act, the mere professing to tell fortunes implied an intent to deceive, and he (the President) offered this advice—that all professors should get out of England and practise in Scotland ; and this led to the question why, if a man professing in England is a rogue and a vagabond, should he go scot free in Scotland ? The object of the League should be to endeavour to obtain a repeal of the Act, for while it remained unrepealed there was nothing to prevent prosecutions.

Mr. Dodson, general secretary, a solicitor practising in Halifax, addressing the meeting, said that the recent decisions were a scandal to the law, but not to the lawyers ; but we ought not to be shocked, for our judges were apparently paid to play skittles with each other's decisions. After commenting upon the various decisions, he remarked that Mr. Justice Denman had said there was no need to go so far as to prove ' intent to deceive,' while, on the other hand, Lord Young had said that it must be *proved* that ' there *was* intent to deceive.' Speaking with emphasis, Mr. Dodson said that it was pitiable to see the judges differing in this way. Having no knowledge of the occult, they were unable to judge in cases of this kind. Intent to deceive ought to be made the important point. Many cases were quoted, and Mr. Dodson related some interesting experiences, telling the audience how he came to be interested in and to take up the work of the League.

Mr. Alan Leo read a letter from the astrologer ' Raphael,' in which he was requested to hand Mr. Dodson the ' enclosed cheque for ten guineas,' ' Raphael' being in sympathy with the work. A letter was also read from ' Sepharial.'

Mr. King, Mrs. Alan Leo, and Mr. W. Foulsham were also among the speakers. It was finally moved, seconded, and carried unanimously, that the work of the League should be in the direction of a total repeal of the Vagrancy Act. A very interesting discussion followed, and it was decided to hold an annual conference in London.

THE deep conviction of the indestructibleness of our nature through death, which every one carries at the bottom of his heart, depends altogether upon the consciousness of the original and eternal nature of our being.—SCHOPENHAUER.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPIRITUALISM.

AN EASTER SERMON.

BY MINOT J. SAVAGE.

The Rev. Minot J. Savage has been preaching a sermon on the question of a future life, with special reference to Spiritualism. The 'Banner of Light' (Boston) has reproduced the discourse in full, and we should have been pleased to do so, too, had space permitted. As it is, we must content ourselves with the quotation of some of the most salient passages:—

The one wonderful thing about Spiritualism, without any reference to its truth or its falsity, is that it does not ask your blind belief. It says, 'Come and see, and do not believe a word beyond what you can see or hear or feel of reality that carries with it this great conviction.'

Let us look at a few of the characteristics of Spiritualism. What is called Modern Spiritualism, as I suppose all of you know, began in Hydesville, a little town in this State, in 1848. It had been preceded, however, in the modern world by other facts, which were given a similar interpretation. The family of the Wesleys, of which John and Charles were the most distinguished members, was turned topsy-turvy by what were supposed to be visitations from the unseen world, though they were not accepted as from above, but rather taken to be devices of devils. Perhaps the most of you know that the home of old Dr. Phelps in Connecticut was haunted by similar happenings. Professor Phelps of Andover, the son of the old doctor, held the belief firmly to the last hour of his life that they had a spiritual origin, though his orthodoxy prevented him from consenting to any but a demoniac explanation of the visitations. Professor Phelps, as you know, is the father of Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, who has written so many books dealing with themes of this character. This preceded the outbreak at Hydesville. What did that consist of? Of rappings, of movement of physical objects, of all sorts of communications, for which there could be found no explanation but a spiritual one.

I wish to consider the attitude of the ordinary church toward this movement, and similar ones.

It has always seemed to me a little curious that the average minister will tell you you are a very wicked person if you doubt immortality; and he will tell you, with equal emphasis, that you are a very wicked person if you undertake to prove it. He wants you to accept it as an article of faith. I understand the attitude of these men because I have lived through it. Long before I attempted to study the matter at all, I knew all about it. I preached against it. I demolished the entire movement conclusively. I believed that it was false, foolish, wicked. I proved everything, just as a young minister is apt to do before he has studied matters. I demolished Theodore Parker in the same way before I had read one of his books. I have noticed generally that the thoroughness with which any one of these causes is demolished coincides with the ignorance of the demolisher. The people who know it all are generally the ones who know absolutely nothing about it. That has been the result of my research and experience.

I have wondered why ministers should not welcome demonstration, at least for the sake of those who without demonstration could not accept this central principle of Christianity. There has never been a religion on the face of the earth that did not start with precisely the same kind of happenings that Spiritualists claim are taking place to-day—never one. Only it is immensely to the advantage of Spiritualism, let me repeat again, that the happenings are supposed to take place to-day, the witnesses are alive, can be cross-examined. You can find out whether they are honest men, or whether they are dishonest, whether they have been deluded, or whether they have really found out something of value. You can find out these facts to-day; while concerning the basis of all the other religions you must simply take the questions at issue on faith, because they are no longer capable of investigation.

I have never called myself a Spiritualist. I have been charged with being a coward and time-server for not doing so. I believe that at the heart of Spiritualism there is a great truth, perhaps not yet clearly outlined, understood, or demonstrated; but I have never been able to call myself a Spiritualist, because, as that word is used popularly in the newspapers, it would utterly misrepresent me. There are so many things connected with the movement that I not only do not believe, but with which I am disgusted beyond words, that I am not willing yet to wear the name. I hardly need say that it is no cowardice. If I have never proved anything else in the last thirty years, I think I have proved to those who are acquainted with me that I am not afraid to wear any label which belongs to me.

Spiritualism as organised has been its own worst enemy.

There have been a large class among Spiritualists who are so credulous that they will believe anything, no matter what, that is told them, without investigating or asking for evidence. Another thing that has been against them—not with me, however, I take pride in saying—is that the movement started with the poor and the meek and lowly ones of earth; but there is a striking parallelism right in there with early Christianity. You know people went around then, not asking whether Jesus was a real prophet or whether what He said was true, but how many of the Scribes or the Pharisees believed on him. Men commonly wait for a popular movement before they join. Spiritualism started in this same way; and I have met a great many people who have confessed to me privately that they believed, but would not say so because it was not popular. One famous English scientific man told me in private conversation that he had been experimenting for years, and knew that Spiritualism was true; but, he added, 'I do not talk with people about it, because I used to call every man who had anything to do with it a fool, and I do not enjoy being called a fool myself.' So he kept still.

These are some of the obstacles that have stood in the way of the progress of the movement called Spiritualism. Now one word in its favour. The other day all the newspapers in New York had long articles as to the belief of the Rev. Dr. Abbott, of Plymouth Church; and they were coupled with an account concerning the belief of Dr. Hillis, his successor, both of whom believed, according to their own statements, all that is essential to Spiritualism, only they were both very careful and most anxious to guard themselves against the possible suspicion of belief in such vulgar things as a rap on a table or a movement of a physical object. For the life of me I can never understand what there is so foolish or degrading in a rap. Suppose you were in one room of a hotel and I in another, and I should want to call on you. If I am courteous and half-polite, I do not open the door and rush in without finding out whether you want to see me or not. I tap on the door to announce myself. Suppose I have a friend in the Unseen, close by me, who wishes to communicate something to me, and finds he can call my attention by a tap. Is there anything so very silly about it? If there is, I am too dull to discover it. And then as to this question of the movement of physical bodies. Did you ever think—please stop and consider this, for it is the essence of the whole matter—if there is a power in the universe that is capable of lifting a grain of wheat or a hair without the use of any muscular or physical effort, then he who has discovered this has crossed the Rubicon and has answered the question as to whether this universe is material or spiritual. If a particle of matter can be moved without muscular contact or physical force, in the ordinary sense in which these words are used, then it is demonstrated to all the world that there is unseen spiritual power at work there; and if these movements indicate intelligence, then the power that moves is an intelligent power.

And yet people talk about these things as though they had no significance at all. This is the shallowest way of dealing with the matter. I have had it said to me a thousand times that whatever claims to come from the other side is always silly and foolish—nothing dignified, nothing worthy. That again shows that the person who makes the statement is not acquainted with the facts. I have had what purported to be hundreds of messages come from the other side, and many have asked me what kind of messages they were. I have frequently replied that they were very much on the level of my daily mail. I get some very silly things every morning in my mail, some malicious things, some stupid things. I get some things tender, and noble, and sweet, some things full of intelligence. And if we could once get our heads free from the nonsense inherited from the old and discarded ideas of the past—such as the idea that the moment a man dies he is either a devil or an angel—this is just what we should expect. If I should die on this platform this morning, and come to consciousness in five minutes, I should expect to be neither more foolish nor more wise than I am now. Why should I be? And if I should send you a message, why should it not be on the average of my present intelligence?

As to this question of intelligence that purports to come from the other side, let me say to you: 'Find out whether the people who make this claim know what they are talking about.' There is no end of trash that purports to come as communicated from the other world. At the same time, there is a whole library of the noblest morals and spiritual teaching that I am acquainted with. I know one book, for example, the author of which was an Oxford graduate, and who during a large part of his life was connected with the London University College School, a member of the Church of England when he began, and afterwards a clergyman in that Church, who became a Spiritualist and a medium both. His book was written automatically, as he tells us, through his own hand. Sometimes, in order to divert his thoughts from what he was writing, he would sit and read Plato in the original Greek, while his hand was at work on

its own account. And this book, contrary to what people ordinarily believe, went squarely against his own religious creeds, and converted him before he got through; and it contains some of the noblest ethical and spiritual teachings to be found in any Bible in all the world.

So do not trust the first squib that you come across in the newspapers in regard to the character of the communications or what happens on these occasions; just do a little inquiring on your own account. The newspapers are not always infallible in regard to all these matters.

The ethics of Spiritualism, as published by its best representatives, are as high and fine as you can find connected with any religion on the face of the earth. This does not prove its peculiar claims at all; but it does prove that it is not a movement to be treated with utter scorn and contempt or as being connected with the offscouring of the earth. Early Christianity, you will remember, if you will read over the writings of Paul, was made up of the people that the respectable did not have anything to do with. Spiritualism has until modern times been made up of much the same class of people. But now such names as Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lloyd Garrison, and others by the score, are associated with it; and some of the noblest, most intelligent people with whose names you are familiar were open and avowed adherents of Spiritualism.

Remember, then, that this is a great and, in the main, genuine, sincere movement, and that, whether its claims or any part of them shall ever be found true or not, it stands for the same great hope that makes the glory of our Easter morning.

'STUDIES IN THE THOUGHT WORLD.'

This is a collection of essays, originally published in reviews, dealing with various aspects of Mental Science. The Dynamics of Mind; Auto-Suggestion and Concentration; and Ownership through Idealism, are some of the subjects dealt with.

There is but one primal energy: Infinite Mind, says Mr. Wood, and thoughts are forces. If all energy in its last analysis be Intelligent Mind, and vibration the universal method, we may infer that the human mind or will, as a part of the whole, can form no exception in the working plan of its orderly activities.

The Infinite Uncreate is the primal and universal energy, but man is its embodier and manifester; hence the dynamic and formative potency of his thought. This recognition of the potency and utility of the projective vibration of thought is an unprecedented and immense step in scientific achievement and spiritual evolution. As soon as man recognises that he is a mental and spiritual dynamo, he will no longer remain a vassal in his own kingdom. Mind, as a *force*, is no more unintelligible or unthinkable than other vibrations of unseen energy. And here lies the tremendous significance of the new psychology or recognition of soul-force.

Thoughts being forces, every mind is a centre from which rhythms of qualitative energy are going out in all directions. By their impact upon corresponding chords in other minds, these are also swept into active vibration. When the art of projecting thought-vibrations on a high plane is cultivated, and the concentrative habit developed, potency for good is increased a hundredfold. Quality of thinking determines, or rather *is*, vital character.

There should be intelligent and concentrated self-suggestion that ideals like health, harmony, &c., are a *present possession*; this attitude of mind, firmly held, will in due time bring them into manifestation. Contrary outward appearances and physical sensations must be held in abeyance. The inmost and real is already perfect. The grandest claims must be held as *already existent*, and adhered to till outwardly actualised. The practice of daily systematic concentration upon ideals should be pursued. When such positive conditions become a habit, a permanent purposeful attitude of mind is attained.

Q.V.

SPIRITUALISM has settled, definitely settled, the fact of man's future conscious existence—the fact that those called dead are alive, and hold daily converse with human beings, and it has settled the fact that Jesus of Nazareth and Confucius, the seers and the martyrs, the great and the good of antiquity, still live in the higher, heavenly life, and are there engaged in the great self-sacrificing work of education, redemption, and the uplifting of those in the lower spheres of existence.—DR. J. M. PEEBLES.

* By HENRY WOOD. London: Gay and Bird.

IN MEMORIAM.

We regret to have to record the decease, on the 4th inst., at his residence, Honor Oak, of Mr. E. W. Allen, publisher, of 4, Ave Maria-lane. Mr. Allen had been the wholesale publisher of 'LIGHT' from the year of its commencement (1881) to the time of his departure, so that we had an acquaintance with him of many years' duration, and now that he has gone from our midst it is to us a very pleasant memory that during all that time our business relations were of a most friendly character, and that we ever found in him a man of the strictest honour and integrity. He was a convinced Spiritualist, and took an intelligent interest in our cause; and, though he called himself a Conservative, he was, like many another of the same political faith, intensely liberal in regard to all endeavours to promote the social and religious advancement of his fellows. To his employes he was a kind and generous master, and he was justly loved by all who had the pleasure and advantage of his friendship. The deceased, who was sixty-seven years of age, has left a widow, but no family. To his widow we tender our respectful sympathy on her temporary loss. The funeral took place on the 9th inst. at Norwood Cemetery, a choral service having been previously held in St. Augustine's Church, Honor Oak, at which our risen friend had been a regular attendant.

NEW PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- 'A Modern Omar Khayyám.' By R. DIDDEN. London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C. Price 1s.
- 'Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1897.' Washington, U.S.A.
- 'Hypnotism. How it is Done; Its Uses and Dangers.' By JAMES R. COCKE, M.D. Boston, Mass., U.S.A.: Messrs. Lee and Shepard, 10, Milk-street. Price 6s.
- 'Education During Sleep.' By SYDNEY FLOWER, LL.D. Chicago: Chas. H. Kerr & Co., 56, Fifth-avenue. Price 10 cents.
- 'How to Hypnotise.' By SYDNEY FLOWER, LL.D. Chicago: Chas. H. Kerr & Co., 56, Fifth-avenue. Price 10 cents.
- 'Somnambulism.' By ARTHUR L. WEBB. Chicago: Chas H. Kerr & Co., 56, Fifth-avenue. Price 25 cents.
- 'Hypnotism Up to Date.' By SYDNEY FLOWER, LL.D. Chicago: Chas. H. Kerr & Co., 56, Fifth-avenue. Price 25 cents.
- 'The Rights of Women and the Sexual Relations.' From the German of KARL HEINZEN. Now first published in a complete English edition. Chicago: Chas H. Kerr & Co., 56, Fifth-avenue. Price 50 cents.
- 'The Arena,' for May. Contains: 'Eddyism Exposed'; 'Christian Science and its Prophetess' (illustrated); 'Illustrious Lunatics'; 'The Divine Opulence'; 'The Unseen Face'; 'The Harmony of Life,' &c. London: Gay & Bird, 22, Bedford-street, Strand, W.C. Price 1s. 6d.
- 'Une Echappée sur l'Infini.' Par ED. GRIMARD. Paris: Leymarie, Rue Saint Jacques, 42. Price 3 francs 50 centimes.
- 'Wisdom and Folly.' A Treatise on the Problem of Life and the Laws of Compensation. By JOHN T. DOW. Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.A. Price 20 cents.
- 'Materialismo Spirituale.' DOTTORE EDVIGE BENIGNI. Roma: Tipografia di Giovanni Balbi, Via della Mercede, 28, 29.
- 'The Healer,' for May. New York, U.S.A.: 424, Greene-avenue, Brooklyn. Price 10 cents.
- 'The Theosophist,' for May. Contains: 'Old Diary Leaves,' by Colonel Olcott; 'The Auras of Metals'; 'Views on Thought and Matter'; 'Evidences of Supersensuous Consciousness'; 'Real and Seeming Doubles'; 'Bengali Folk Lore,' &c. London Agents: Theosophical Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. Price 2s.
- 'The Theosophical Review,' for May. Contains: 'The Heavenly Kingdom of the Holy Grail'; 'The Trimegistic Literature'; 'The End of the Keely Motor'; 'Scattered Scraps of Ancient Atlantis'; 'On Some Difficulties of the Inner Life,' by Annie Besant, &c. London: 26, Charing Cross, S.W. Price 1s.
- 'The Lyceum Banner,' 'The South African Spiritualist,' &c.

AN invitation is offered to earnest and reverent inquirers seeking knowledge of Spiritualism, on Sunday evenings, at 7 o'clock.—Address W. M., at 45, Trinity-road, Tooting, S.W.

SLATE-WRITING THROUGH A PRIVATE MEDIUM.

The following impressive account is given by a distinguished artist, one of the senior members of the Corporation of the New York Academy of Design (equivalent to our Royal Academy). He is also known as the author of a much-admired memoir of a leading American artist.

This confirmation of the phenomenon of slate-writing, obtained on the spur of the moment in his own studio, through a non-professional medium whose whole life since childhood was known to the narrator, and the striking testimony implicit in its content, are most valuable. Surely it will encourage the S.P.R. to investigate this phenomenon to which they pertinaciously close their eyes. Q.V.

MY DEAR 'QUESTOR VITE,'—The remarkable test given me, in the séance of which I spoke in our recent interview, was of such satisfying character, so startling, and so convincing, that I deem it worthy of a place in the list of formulated evidences that are confronting and confounding the derisive incredulity of our materialistic age. I am, therefore, happy to comply with your request, and give it in writing.

A young woman in delicate health, whom I have known for several years, frequently met in my studio an old gentleman, a friend of mine, a graduate of Harvard University, and a man of high culture, who interested himself in investigating the claims of Spiritualism. One day, in a conversation upon the subject of spiritual manifestations, he said to her: 'Helen, I am going to see Mrs. Mayer, the famous slate-writing medium, would you like to go with me?' The young woman's curiosity was so aroused by what he had just said of the mode of intercommunion, that she gladly accepted the invitation to accompany him.

As soon as Mrs. Mayer saw Helen she said to her: 'You are yourself a slate-writing medium.' Helen replied that she had never witnessed slate-writing, and was not conscious that she had any mediumistic power whatever. The séance followed, and Helen was deeply and excitedly interested. Strange and indescribable sensations possessed her, and seemed to give emphasis to Mrs. Mayer's declaration of her mediumship, the truth of which was soon verified in séances at which her sisters, my old friend, and myself were present.

On one occasion about a month later, when I was alone with her in my studio, I said: 'Come, Helen, let us hold the slate, and see if we can't get some communication from the spirits.' Accordingly we seated ourselves at a little oval table, one on each side, and placing our right hands on the table, held the slate with a small pencil on it with our left hands under the table. Presently we heard the pencil scratching as if someone were writing. With bated breath we listened till three raps, as with the pencil on the slate, signalled us that the communication was finished. I examined the slate and read what purported to be a message to me, signed 'Elizabeth,' the name of the wife of my youth, who entered the world of spirits when I was but twenty-three years old. I then asked her audibly to give me a message for our son, and again we held the slate as before. Immediately the pencil was heard moving rapidly. At the conclusion of this second writing, I of course expected to see a communication from 'Elizabeth' to our son 'Alexander,' now a man past middle life, but, to my surprise, the message was as follows: 'Tell Aleck I have forgiven him.—Virginia.' Virginia was the name of my second wife. The signature was so indistinctly written that I could not be quite sure I had read it correctly. We again held the slate under the table, and I said: 'The signature looks like "Virginia," am I right in so reading it?' Immediately the pencil moved, as with more strength, and I received the following message distinctly written: 'Tell Aleck I love him, and have forgiven him. Virginia.' These few words were so weighted with emotional significance to me that I could not conceal my agitation. Helen, perceiving it, said: 'Why, what's the matter?' 'That message,' said I, 'is a rescript of a passage in my early life, filled with painful memories. It refers to events that occurred over forty years ago; no mortal but myself knows its meaning. It is a test that, as

it were, rends the veil of the unseen, and places me in the visible presence of my wife, Virginia.' To Helen's questioning curiosity I outlined the explanation of the message, and of my evident perturbation.

Elizabeth's son was six years old when I married Virginia. He was soon informed by some officious neighbour that he had a stepmother, and that stepmothers were dreadful characters. The suspicious element in his nature thus aroused, he became alert to discover cause of complaint in her conduct. Every restraint laid upon him by me was charged to her influence. His deportment towards her was extremely disagreeable and entirely without justifying cause. Indeed, so offensive had his treatment of his stepmother become that when, at the age of nineteen, he proposed to devote himself to a seafaring life, I encouraged him to do so. Accordingly he embarked on a ship bound for Calcutta. Becoming dissatisfied with the life of a sailor, he deserted the ship in Calcutta, where he remained six years. Meanwhile his stepmother passed on to that higher life for which her pure nature, her high qualities—intellectual, moral, and religious—had fully prepared her.

On his outward voyage Aleck had abundant time for meditation, and that serious introspection which is the forerunner of personal reformation. Under conditions so favourable to self-arraignment and self-accusation, his sense of justice asserted itself, and, banishing his suspicions regarding his stepmother's influence, thronged his mind with memories of her unselfishness and her uniform kindly treatment. In his hours of loneliness, through all the years of his absence, her image was before him as an accusing angel whose accusations were but reflections of his own consciousness and self-condemnation. Thus chastened and softened to a tender and loving appreciation of her worth, the news of her departure touched his heart with a true penitent sorrow, and he hastened home. Almost immediately on his return, at his request, I went with him to her grave. As we stood over the little mound of earth, with tears of remorse and convulsive sobs he leaned upon my shoulder, and exclaimed: 'Oh, father, how I have longed to return, that I might show her that I really honoured and respected her, even while I behaved so badly and caused her so much unhappiness!'

In the light of this brief narration how significant and impressive becomes the message, 'Tell Aleck I have forgiven him'—significant and impressive, especially coming, as it did, in the privacy of my own studio, and through the mediumship of a novice but recently aware of her psychic capability, and totally ignorant of the matter alluded to or of the circumstances suggesting the message.

How long the strongholds of popular prejudice and unbelief can withstand tests so accredited we cannot determine, but surely rational impugment of such evidences is impossible. JUSTICE.

A PREMONITION.

'A case of extraordinary premonition is brought to our notice,' says the 'Westminster Gazette,' 'by a correspondent who has received a private letter from Gresling, where a colliery accident occurred on Monday morning (the 8th inst.). The writer of the letter is a person of absolute credibility, and one in the best position to know the facts. According to this letter a collier named Mathew Kirkland, employed at the pit where the accident happened, dreamed on the Sunday night that "he saw the cage dash down from the top to the bottom and smash all the men." He awoke his wife, telling her his dream, and that it made him ill. "Well, don't go, lad," she answered. He did not go, but it appears that had he gone he would have been in the actual cage that was smashed. Here is a nice case for psychical research, for, says our correspondent, the facts are absolutely authentic.'

CO-OPERATIVE HOLIDAYS.—The programme of the Co-operative Holidays Association in connection with the National Home Reading Union shows what surprising economies can be effected by careful organisation. Holidays are announced at Whitby, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the English Lakes, and amid the wild and little-known scenery of Swaledale. Here a week's holiday for the impecunious is arranged for the phenomenal charge of 16s.! We notice that the association has opened a delightful guest-house on the Gareloch, Scotland, and also that it has federated with the London Polytechnic. Programme can be had by sending stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary, Abbey House, Whitby.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT, 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.
SATURDAY, MAY 20th, 1899.

EDITOR E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Assisted by a Staff of able Contributors.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—'LIGHT' may be had free by post on the following terms:—Twelve months, 10s. 10d.; six months, 5s. 5d. Payments to be made in advance. To United States, 2dol. 70c.

Light,

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. B. D. Godfrey, and should invariably be crossed '——— & Co.' 'LIGHT' may also be obtained from E. W. ALLEN, 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and all Booksellers.

A WALK IN A CEMETERY.

A short time ago, we were called to join the little company whose meeting place was a quiet cemetery a few miles beyond the roar of the great city. We reached the appointed spot early, and, as it turned out, the funeral was late. As the morning was fine, we preferred to wander about the grounds, rather than sit in a dismal chapel, and we presently began to notice some of the inscriptions at the head of the little mounds. At first they repelled. There was nothing but the old conventional stone-cutter's phrases, as insipid as a funeral card, and as unreal as—the ordinary burial service. The special stone of offence repeated with irritating iteration the too familiar platitude concerning the resurrection of the body. We call it a platitude because it is, for the most part, a very threadbare survival, repeated parrot-like by many, but realised by no one, and believed only by a few.

Here, on one stone, is the line 'waiting here the morning of the first resurrection.' Is it uncharitable to ask whether the purchaser of the stone had the slightest idea what 'the first resurrection' meant? We know the phrase is scriptural, but that says little, and proves nothing: and, in this particular case, the phrase is utterly inapplicable. It occurs in the Book of the Revelation, and is used in connection with those who had been 'beheaded for the testimony of Jesus.' These, the martyrs, it is said, would rise first, long before others: and 'this is the first resurrection.' Even, then, though the Book of the Revelation were accurate, it is perfectly plain that no modern English person could have any part or lot in 'the first resurrection.' And yet it is here placidly asserted, in that stolid, unreasoning way which is so dear to the average Englishman, especially when religion is concerned.

But one might also ask our question concerning the general profession of faith in the resurrection of the body. Here, for instance, is a verse,—the ordinary conventional verse,—the like of which can be picked up by scores:—

Blessed are they, and only they,
Who in the Lord, the Saviour, die.
Their bodies wait redemption's day,
And sleep in peace where'er they lie.

That homely bit of stone-cutter's poetry, probably selected from a trade book with fifty others, equally respectable and equally unmeaning, is almost certain to be a survival, neither really believed nor truly realised by the person who paid for it. Is there anybody who absolutely realises and believes that anyone's body will actually 'wait' in the grave, and 'sleep' until the day of resurrection in, say, perhaps six hundred thousand years?

A little stone close by has about it an infinitely finer

air of intention and truth. It simply says: 'Because I live ye shall live also';—a precious truth. We hope those who set up this little stone grasped the full significance of the declaration it sets forth. The great teacher, whose heart, at a critical moment, went out towards his sorrowful disciples, was trying to comfort them in the prospect of their great bereavement. He identifies himself with them, and assures them that what will happen to him will also happen to them. 'I shall live,' he says, 'and you will live': and, with that assurance, goes the promise of reunion in the Father's house beyond the veil.

After another dreary interval of conventionality or commonplace, we came upon the consoling verse from Isaiah (xxvi. 3), 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.' It is astonishing how these deep primary trusts and truths last. This lovely confession of faith might have been born to-day in the soul of a modern believer. There is nothing we can take from it: there is nothing we need add to it. It is like the morning star which floats in the tender blue just as it did thousands upon thousands of years ago. It has nothing to do with a speculation or an opinion: it is one of the fundamental verities of human nature, held fast by the divine. It was before all the creeds, and it will survive them all. It is the beginning and the end of natural religion,—the spirit's trust in the overbrooding presence, at once consoler, guide and saviour.

Not far away, there smiled out upon us the charming suggestion: 'Morte disjuncti nunc morte juncti,' '*divided by death, now by death united.*' The sorrowful but beautiful story was never more simply told. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,' said Paul: but we would prefer to say that the enemy will be transformed into a friend. Death divides for what, after all, is only a moment; to befriend us presently, and unite us under conditions which will bring us infinite repayments for all we had to suffer. We may, indeed, think of death as never an enemy. There is a dark stream to cross before we can reach home, and we can cross it only one by one. The little boat that parts will soon be the boat that will unite. It is not our enemy but our friend.

Two stones, not far from one another, are intensely truthful in their beautiful simplicity. 'Gone from this room into the next,' says one;—a sentiment which every Spiritualist will understand and joyfully accept. 'I am so tired, let me rest,' says the other: and once more the Spiritualist will understand. The two combined are very full of light. For myriads of weary souls death is but the passing out of the work room into the rest room: and the wise and gracious people beyond the veil will well know what to do.

Here, under a golden laburnum, is a little stone, with this: 'Aged 2 years and 3 months. She joined the angels on December 7th.' Happy father and mother who could say it! Perhaps, after all, the keenest because the most pathetic loss is that of a little child. Many things conspire to make it the most touching sorrow a man or woman can ever know. And yet, behind and within it, the sweetest and clearest consolations whisper. The pure and tender spirit has not risked the contaminations and scars of the battle of life. It may miss much, but it may retain infinitely more: and of none could it more assuredly be said, 'She joined the angels.'

In that dear world the best and fairest meet;
The chosen ones of every land and time;
But there, the sound of little feet is heard;
For, in the happy streets, fair children walk,
And Christ still loves them as in days of old.
Wise voices, and the lips of saintly souls,
Trained here through many days of stress and pain,
Lift, loud and sweet, the glorious harmony
That would lament and halt, as incomplete,
Were children absent from the sacred choir.

'QUÆSTOR VITÆ' AND THE BANGS SISTERS.

BY DR. RICHARD HODGSON.

(Continued from page 225.)

(3.) '*Religio-Philosophical Journal*' for June 13th, 1891. This contains a very brief account of the exposure of the Bangs Sisters published in the '*Chicago Sunday Star*' for June 7th, 1891. I quote a portion of it :—

'An infuriated woman in undress and flourishing a big revolver; another woman still more scantily clothed who but a moment before had been personating the materialised spirit of the wife and mother of two visitors, now quivering with fright and rage; and an old dotard flourishing another revolver in defence of these women, made up a tableau never to be forgotten by those who witnessed the latest *exposé* of the notorious Bangs Sisters on Thursday night of last week.

'Mr. C. V. Peckham, a well-known and reputable business man of Chicago, lost his wife a few weeks ago. While suffering deep anguish over his loss, he was approached by an acquaintance who assured him that he could again see his beloved wife in materialised form if he would visit one Mrs. Jennie Moore. Longing for some evidence that his dear one still lived, he visited Mrs. Moore. At first he was deceived, but after a few visits he discovered the deception. Still hoping there was a reality in the assertions of his acquaintance, he was induced to visit Lizzie Bangs, taking his daughter with him. There his wife again appeared, and his daughter was so overcome she fainted. After further experience he had grave doubts about the *bonâ fide* nature of this show, too; and took measures to test it. On the night of the *exposé*, he repaired to the quarters of Lizzie Bangs, after arranging to have several friends present, also his son. The show proceeded in the usual way until the alleged spirit, Mrs. Peckham, appeared. While addressing her son in loving terms, Mr. Peckham, senior, drew near and with a sudden spring embraced the spirit. Scream after scream rent the air, and unutterable confusion ensued. Instead of spirit Mrs. Peckham, the voluptuous form and features of May Bangs stood unmasked.

'The better to deceive the public, Lizzie, it is reported, has pretended to be still on bad terms with her sister May and that she would not allow her on the premises. Hence the profound astonishment of Mrs. Voorhees and others when May was disclosed personating the spirit. The 'conditions' had seemed fraud-proof to these silly dupes. Mrs. Voorhees was a swift witness for A. B. Richmond in his lame effort to sustain his wonderful hanging slate test at Cassadaga, when these same Bangs women were the mediums, but in this instance she unreservedly pronounces the show a fraud, and left the house in tears.

'May Bangs has been giving materialising séances of late in Michigan and Indiana, it is said, assisted by Harry DeWolf, a son of Mrs. Sara A. DeWolf—who was also one of the committee appointed to go to Springfield by the indignation meeting of frauds and their friends in this city. May slipped back to Chicago on the day of the evening on which Lizzie was to exhibit, in order to personate Mrs. Peckham. It is alleged that Harry DeWolf was also one of the confederates on the same evening.

'Up to date the Bangs Sisters have not made any public statement.'

The following statement I quote from the '*Chicago Sunday Star*' of June 7th, 1891 :—

'The Bangs Sisters, Lizzie and May, are well-known characters. Their career as materialising mediums has been marked by a long line of successes, if triumph over credulity can properly be so called. Internal dissensions separated them, nominally at least. May sued Lizzie on three occasions, and the malodour of the pair was made apparent to the public by frequent airings in court. Some time ago Lizzie established herself at No. 11, South Elizabeth-street. To this Mecca of emotion came many who sought the solace of conversation with departed ones.

'Among the believers was Mr. C. W. Bigden, a merchant of Buffalo, N. Y. He was shown the spirit of his daughter, and believed. He brought his wife from Buffalo, and she too became a convert, and actually changed her residence to this city that she might be near to the medium. Mr. Bigden spread the glad tidings—as he believed—and brought other members of his family, among them being Mr. W. C. Bigden, a prominent merchant, who resides at No. 597, Ogden-avenue. He, in turn, introduced Mr. Charles V. Peckham, the insurance adjuster, of No. 234, LaSalle-street. Mr. Peckham attended several séances, accompanied by his daughter and his son and daughter-in-law. Being a man of sound sense, Mr. Peckham half-doubted, even though his senses seemed to assure him of the truth of the medium's professions. He resolved on a test and so, accompanied by

five friends, he proceeded, on Thursday evening, to the home of Lizzie Bangs. What he discovered is said in a nutshell in the following affidavit, signed, in addition to the investigators, by a lady who was present on the occasion :—

Chicago, June 5th, 1891.

We, the undersigned, hereby solemnly affirm that on the evening of June 4th, 1891, at the house No. 11, South Elizabeth-street, at a so-called spiritualistic materialising séance, held and given by Miss Lizzie Bangs as medium, an alleged spirit, called by the medium that of Mrs. Charles V. Peckham, was seized and found to be Miss May Bangs. Also that investigation proved that the representations made by said Lizzie Bangs, on day and date named, were false in all particulars, and that the materialising séances held by said Lizzie Bangs as medium are absolutely false and fraudulent. All the parties whose names are affixed to this instrument were present on the occasion of said exposure. In addition to this general affirmation Charles V. Peckham affirms that he seized said May Bangs while impersonating the spirit of his wife.

(Signed)

CHAS. V. PECKHAM, No. 234, LaSalle-street.
CHAS. L. PECKHAM, No. 234, LaSalle-street.
ELIJAH M. CLARK, Rookery-building.
A. C. CLARK, Rookery-building.
C. H. ROWE, No. 400, Center-street.
J. F. DIX, 'The Sunday Star.'
ELLEN VOORHEES, No. 47, Campbell Park.'

This is followed by the detailed account of the exposure, with comments upon some of the persons present, from which I take the following :—

'Mrs. Voorhees was certainly innocent of any pre-knowledge of the Bangs methods. She left the house in tears. She had been hoodwinked by the sisters, having expended at least 500dol. for the privilege of watching their undress masquerades, and was so happy at being undeceived that she gladly signed the affidavit prefixed to this account.'

The general endorsement given by Colonel Bundy to the fact of this exposure is abundant evidence, apart from other considerations, that the account in the '*Star*' is substantially reliable. I may, however, add that the chief agents of the exposure have been recently interviewed in Chicago, that they confirm all the main facts of the exposure, and are ready if need be to make further written statements on the subject. I say this in case there should be any further statements made by Mr. Stobbs or others that may seem intended to suggest that Colonel Bundy was hasty in his endorsement of the exposure in question.

I repeat that I was cognisant of these three cases of exposure of the Bangs Sisters at the time when the incidents occurred, that I was well aware of the care used by Colonel Bundy before he brought any charges of fraud against mediums, and was particularly advised by him with reference to the Bangs Sisters; and in my opinion each case taken alone is enough in itself to justify the conclusion that the Bangs Sisters have been guilty of fraud.

I now invite the reader's consideration to the course pursued by '*Quæstor Vitæ*' with reference to the Bangs Sisters.

In '*LIGHT*' for January 25th, 1896, '*Quæstor Vitæ*' gives an account of his typewriting séance with Miss Bangs. It begins as follows :—

'The medium, Dr. Rogers, through whom the typewriting was presented in Carnegie Hall, New York, which I described a short time ago, has since then been imprisoned for fraudulent personation in connection with materialisations. This fact will naturally cast suspicion upon all other phenomena which have been presented through him. I therefore determined to obtain confirmatory evidence, if possible, of the presentation of similar phenomena through other channels.'

After describing his visit to Mrs. Voorhees in Chicago, '*Quæstor Vitæ*' continues :—

'I then called on Miss Bangs and explained the fraudulent implication cast by the arrest of Rogers, and asked her if she would give an illustration of the phenomenon under conditions which would admit of facile verification, to which request she consented.'

Nowhere in his article does '*Quæstor Vitæ*' refer to any charge of fraud against the Bangs Sisters. Yet when confronted with my statement to Dr. Dariex that the Bangs Sisters had been exposed, which I sent in consequence of my attention having been drawn to the account in the

'Annales des Sciences Psychiques' (Juillet—Août, 1896), 'Quæstor Vitæ' replied that he knew before experimenting that the Bangs Sisters had been convicted of fraud. It does not clearly appear why 'Quæstor Vitæ' should have mentioned the fraud of Rogers while not mentioning the fraud of the Bangs Sisters, which he apparently, at that time, accepted as proved.

It seems probable that the Mrs. Voorhees who gave him the information about Miss Bangs and the typewriting, was the same Mrs. Voorhees who signed the document in connection with the third charge of fraud against the Bangs Sisters (II. (3.) *supra*), affirming 'fraudulent personation in connection with materialisations'—to use 'Quæstor Vitæ's' phrase concerning Rogers; and it may be that Mrs. Voorhees gave 'Quæstor Vitæ' some information regarding that exposure. But whatever the source of 'Quæstor Vitæ's' knowledge that the Bangs Sisters had been convicted of fraud, he makes no reference to it in his communication to 'LIGHT' for December 17th, 1898. Further, in that same communication, he makes no reference to any investigation made by himself as to the evidence of their fraud, except his inquiry of Miss Bangs. He seems to have taken for granted that her reply, with the document which she forwarded to him, was a sufficient refutation of my statement to Dr. Dariex that the Bangs Sisters had been exposed. In reply to this I specified three separate charges of fraud that had been brought against the Bangs Sisters, and I suggested a doubt that the document adduced by Miss Bangs was what it was represented to be, viz., a justification of the genuineness of her phenomena. In answer to this, 'Quæstor Vitæ' tries to evade the main point at issue; he makes no attempt to explain how these three charges 'are covered by the statement made to him by Miss Bangs, and the certificate which she sent to him.' Instead of doing so, he misrepresents me in various ways, upon the consideration of which I need not enter, and he introduces a statement by Mr. F. L. Stobbs, which he assumes to be satisfactory and complete. His reliance now upon Mr. Stobbs may be compared with his previous reliance upon Miss Bangs. And just as we found Miss Bangs suppressing two charges out of the three at least which were publicly brought against her, and offering for the remaining charge a document in exoneration which was no exoneration, so we find Mr. Stobbs industrially concealing the real facts of all three charges, and even endeavouring to impeach the sincerity of Colonel Bundy by the use of a garbled extract. Such is the method pursued by 'Quæstor Vitæ,' and such are his witnesses. (*Qui facit per alium facit per se.*)

I pass now to consider another question raised by 'Quæstor Vitæ,' which has a special importance apart from the Bangs Sisters.

III. In 'LIGHT,' for December 17th, 1898, 'Quæstor Vitæ' stated that I wrote to Dr. Dariex, after reading 'Quæstor Vitæ's' account of his experiences, that 'the Sisters Bangs had been unmasked, and that the experiences in question must be considered as trickery.' I am willing for the present to accept this re-Anglicised version of my statement to Dr. Dariex, but I decline to identify it with the various statements of my position which 'Quæstor Vitæ' erroneously attributes to me. Thus, in 'LIGHT,' for March 25th, he states that I 'affirmed that the phenomena in question must be considered as having been produced by trickery, because the mediums in question had been accused of fraud'; and in 'LIGHT,' for April 1st, he speaks of 'the position assumed by Dr. Hodgson—that phenomena produced through a medium who has been accused of fraud must be taken as trickery.' I have never put forward any such doctrine as this, either expressly or impliedly, even if we change the words *accused of* to *exposed in*. For any erroneous interpretations by other persons of my opinions I am not responsible. It is, indeed, my conviction that all the 'experiences' with the Bangs Sisters of which I have seen any account were due to fraud, but I do not hold this conviction merely *in consequence of* the fact that they have been exposed in trickery. I am, and always have been, quite willing to admit theoretically that a 'medium' who has been guilty of trickery may at other times, notwithstanding, have obtained genuine phenomena. And now I come to what I suspect to be the chief difference of opinion on this point between

'Quæstor Vitæ' and myself. 'Quæstor Vitæ' regards his records of experiences with the Bangs Sisters as evidentially valuable. I, on the contrary, regard them as evidentially worthless. Had the Bangs Sisters never been exposed as tricksters, I should still have regarded the records in question as evidentially worthless; but since they *have* been exposed as tricksters, I regard the manifestations in question as fraudulent. I give briefly my reasons for holding this opinion. In the years 1886 and 1887 (in the 'Journal' of the S.P.R.), a critical examination of a large number of records of experiences concerning certain 'physical phenomena' alleged to be supernormal—an examination conducted chiefly by Mrs. Sidgwick and myself, with the assistance of Mr. S. J. Davey—led to the conclusion that all such records must be vitiated in various degrees owing to the unreliability of human testimony under the circumstances involved, and that evidence of a different kind must be presented to be worthy of any hearing by scientific investigators. Referring to 'Eglinton's writing,' *e.g.*, Mrs. Sidgwick stated ('Journal' of the S.P.R., June, 1886, p. 334): 'I can hardly imagine being myself convinced that it was genuine except by evidence of a different sort, to wit, the testimony of thoroughly competent and trustworthy witnesses' that in several cases it had been produced under circumstances which dispensed with the necessity of continuous observation.' The experience which I have had since 1887 has confirmed me more and more strongly in the conclusion that both the opinions and the reports of even intelligent witnesses on matters of the kind in question are not to be trusted unless the possibilities of mal-observation and lapse of memory can be obliterated. Our investigation showed that the records of such experiences must be regarded as *fundamentally* unreliable. The margin of error is indeed an indefinite quantity and must be regarded as varying with the observers and recorders; but it must be regarded as always possibly, and perhaps probably, large, and it can never be assumed to be so small that the inference from such records to the occurrence of supernormal phenomena is justified. For the full warrant, then, of my position in rejecting 'Quæstor Vitæ's' records as absolutely valueless (except as illustrating misdescriptions of trick performances), I refer him to the discussions in the 'Journal' of the S.P.R., Vols. II. and III., and to the articles on the subject in 'Proceedings' of the S.P.R., Parts XI. and XXII., from the last of which I take the following extract:—

'The plain result from our investigation is that the great bulk of the testimony to the 'physical' marvels of Modern Spiritualism is not entitled to serious consideration as affording any evidence of supernormal phenomena. I may conclude with a warning which I venture to give specially to our members in America, viz., that nearly all professional mediums form a gang of vulgar tricksters who are more or less in league with one another. Associated with this combination, here and there, are certain other persons who either have been, or intend to be, professional mediums, and who are equally untrustworthy. These tricksters are continually deceiving fresh groups of uninitiated observers of their performances, and I frequently receive accounts of them which, I need hardly say, are entirely worthless for the purposes of our investigation. It is not from the professional mediums—so numerous in the United States—for 'slate-writing,' 'materialisation,' and kindred performances, that we can look for any enlightenment whatever, on the positive side, in the course of Psychological Research.'

RICHARD HODGSON.

NEW FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

We are pleased to note that among the names of those who have been selected by the Council of the Royal Society to be recommended for election into the society this year is that of Mr. W. F. Barrett, Professor of Experimental Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin, and a member of many learned societies. Professor Barrett was born in the West Indies, educated at Manchester, and for many years was an assistant to Professor Tyndall at the Royal Institution. He is the author of numerous original investigations and papers. He discovered certain physical phenomena produced by the contact of a hydrogen flame with various bodies, and its application as a delicate chemical re-agent. His other investigations include the discovery of a source of error in the determination of the absorption of heat by liquids, the discovery of molecular changes in iron and steel when raised to a bright heat, and the discovery and investigation of sensitive flames.

REINCARNATION AND DIVINE JUSTICE.

BY 'EXCELSIOR'—RIO DE JANEIRO.

(Continued from page 209.)

III.

The intuitions which may be considered as reminiscences of the past, though in a positive point of view vague and indirect, are more logically conclusive as evidence in favour of our theories than any that can be adduced in support of the spiritual ideal.

The presumption of absolute oblivion of the past is refuted by observation of many psychical facts now familiar. The nature of some dreams not unfrequently indicates familiarity with other worlds and conditions of which we have no waking recollection. May not, therefore, retrospection be effected by a temporary emancipation of the soul during sleep? May not our waking thoughts and actions be strongly influenced by this retrospection? Sleep may, perhaps, momentarily remove the veil, or, for what we know, even a permanent solidarity with the past may unconsciously subsist. Such hypothesis is not more extravagant than those now accepted in relation to hypnotism, presentiments, and many psychical facts.

Your late regretted Editor ('M.A., Oxon.') thus wrote in 'Notes by the Way' (June 20th, 1891): 'I have known children who seem to have brought with them into this world the keys to mysteries that most men plod on to advanced age, solving wearily. One is a born musician, "taught of God," for man had nothing to do with teaching him. Another "lisp in numbers, for the numbers come," a poet born, not made. Another sees and reproduces Nature's subtle beauties that escape the conventional eye, while yet his untrained fingers should be learning to draw a line. Some are 'scientific in the cradle; others have solved abstruse problems of exact science in mathematics before they can talk clearly. In all we trace the results of causes hidden in the past, a book now closed to our inspection. When we are able to read that book, what secrets will be revealed, what problems solved, in the lives of the geniuses of earth!'

If, therefore, the fact be recognised that intuitive qualities are manifested in early life, independently of surrounding influences, these indubitably indicate an origin; and if the diversified tendencies of children often significantly demonstrate previous familiarity with material conditions resembling those of the present life, the inference is obvious and incontestable. And even could it be proved that peculiarly terrestrial aptitudes have not originated in an existence much like the present, such manifest partiality would be the negation of equitable justice and consequently irreconcilable with the first articles of our faith; for God, to be God, cannot be unjust.

There is no outlet to the dilemma thus created and before which all arguments sink into relative insignificance. Absolute justice cannot be separated from a rational conception of God; therefore any hypothesis that admits the possibility of partiality or error; any ideal of a Creator who allows the destinies of the created to be subject to caprice or hazard, is fatal to this conception.

Almost innumerable are the difficulties which arise in investigating the anomalous contradictions presented by every aspect of earthly life, and which have ever been a source of unbelief, and barriers to logical faith.

How often are manifested the most perverse and debased instincts from the very dawn of existence in those who, having the advantages of good example, superior education, and elevated social position, yet develop with their growth the most indomitably vicious tendencies. How numerous are the examples of individuals who, reared in the midst of vice and misery, still conserve a purity and elevation of sentiment that seems to defy such pernicious influences. On the one hand, moral degradation surrounded by refinement; on the other, the purity of the lily on a dung-hill!

If men are created equal, why and whence such discordant results? If no intermediate cause has disturbed original equality, how explain physical, moral, and intellectual degeneracy, the intuitions imbibed, as it were, from the mother's milk, of qualities so opposite and so obviously affecting future destiny? To what attribute the unmerited

prosperity of some, in contrast with the misery and suffering of those who, resigned and courageous, appear to be permanent victims of a capricious and cruel fatality? If no anterior existence has entailed these anomalies, how reconcile them with the justice of our universal Father?

Distort these questions as we may, their inexorable logic persists, for such flagrant partiality cannot be harmonised with an ideal of infinite justice, and, therefore, the theory of future absolute spirituality not only annuls any explanation of the past and all justification of the present, but even vitiates the merit of future progress, because it is evident that from earthly struggles with trials and temptations *must* result a relative superiority or inferiority that will influence ulterior destiny, for to presume that the reprobate and the just are initiated to the 'new departure' under the same conditions, is contrary to reason.

Only by the theory of reincarnation are these difficulties removed: 'By admitting that man brings at birth the intuitions of the past; that he is near or distant from the primitive starting point in accordance with past efforts and progress, all becomes logically comprehensive in relation to both past, present, and future. Only thus can our actions and acquirements be considered to have a purpose and a result; for, by the theory of exclusive spirituality, the fruits of earthly efforts, study, and progress, often interrupted by death at the moment of maturity, would be virtually lost to the individual and the world; whilst by reincarnation all is perpetuated, and in working for all each adds to his own advancement; individual and collective progress cannot be sterile, as nothing is lost, because future individuals and generations are in reality solidary with those now existing.' (Kardec.)

(To be continued.)

GODS OR MEN AS LEADERS.

BY J. W. MAHONY.

At what period in history did the advanced sections of the human race qualify for the authoritative guidance of reason in spiritual matters? The question has been answered in various ways. Some incline to, and some, indeed, are fixed in, the belief that but for the cramping influence and tyrannous sway of the priesthood in ancient times, mankind would have ordered their affairs by the light of reason long centuries ago. This conviction would not prove a safe postulate in a subject so complex and comprehensive. It is doubtless true, in a large degree, that the purveyors of faith and revealed truth numbed the senses and oppressed the minds of the pioneers of civilisation; but the strong emotions and feebly-restrained passions of early historic man, with the interminable wars and tribal strife, afford slender ground for a belief that reason had found a congenial soil in those days. Down to the times of Plato and Aristotle, little was known practically of the real nature and true proportion of things so far as physical geography, physiology, anatomy, anthropology, geology, and astronomy were concerned, and no sufficient reason can be assigned that the advocates of God-given ethics prevented the discovery of truth in these departments of learning. On the contrary, Galileo, Copernicus, Servetus and their kindred spirits on earth, while hindered by ecclesiastical authority, were not overcome, or their labours permanently suppressed. Through the turbulence in early times and the consequent lack of continuity in mental progress, the representatives of revealed morality may have been conservators of reason by setting up mental forts to stem, after the recurrence of devastating wars, a partial relapse into barbarism. Whilst admitting that the priesthood frequently fomented strife for the purposes of dominion and power, it must be admitted that they, nevertheless, healed the wounds of wars not of their own making, and by this means indirectly aided the cause of progress and the growth of truth.

How far the mind-enslaving power of Priestcraft curtailed, or even closed the channels of communication between the higher world and the mundane, and thus cut off the flow of knowledge, and the outpouring of great ideas, remains an important factor in the problem.

When men knew but little of their own physical structure

and possessed meagre knowledge of the earth they inhabited, recourse to gods or to extra human sources for light on the after-death state was not altogether unreasonable or unprofitable. The evil lay in the crystallisation of a mixture of truth and error into an infallible system, upon which to found an ecclesiastical hierarchy for the spiritual government of mankind. Guidance by reason in matters spiritual presupposes many terrestrial developments, and demands ancillary and auxiliary aids and supports to the presiding intelligence.

It is extremely doubtful whether the spiritual welfare of the progressive nations could be assumed by mundane intelligence until the advent of Modern Spiritualism. To take up a strong and self-sustaining position in part opposition to the revealed truths of the Church, called for powers which could be obtained only on the bed-rock of well-ordered social liberty; a free Press, free speech, a widely-diffused intelligence, and a fairly general distribution of food and raiment among the masses, being indispensable conditions. The extra-terrestrial world could not contribute its higher knowledge, or perform the external psychic phenomena among first-world mortals, until the latter had emancipated themselves, mentally and physically, from the control of the Church. It is an elementary lesson with Spiritualists that the phenomenal occurrences which establish the communion between the seen and the unseen world, would not have been permitted twenty years earlier than their actual advent. Individual liberty of action in psychic matters had not achieved a sufficient degree of fulness until the Rochester knockings summoned a rush-lighted world into an electrically-illuminated conference.

The psychic visualisations of the St. Johns, the Blakes, and the Swedenborgs were recounted to an unlistening audience, so far as open-door reason was concerned, and stalwart faith itself was barely adequate for their reception. The intelligently-ordered and many-sided phases of external phenomena, thrust into terrestrial existence by the invisible human workers, afforded reason its first real opportunity to found a spiritual science. All working systems of knowledge are built upon observed phenomena, and no inspiration has much value unless related to material affairs that are within the scope of verifying reason. In so far as the Church has ruled out inspiration and physical phenomena, it may be fairly charged with the obstruction of human progress, but on the other hand, the inability of nations to secure their mental and physical independence left them in the power of priestly dominion. Man commenced to lead, in opposition to certain dogmas of the Church, when the collective inspiration in mundane activities—commonly called civilisation—had reached a stage that gave self-poise to man, and permitted free and unrestricted intercourse between both worlds. Contrary to the dictum of the priest, civilisation is the distinct outcome of the larger revelation of centuries which has, almost unknown to its various instruments, flooded the pathway of man with light for human amelioration and all-round growth.

An instance of the advance in men's leadership in ethical and spiritual matters, the establishment of a college at Khartoum on a non-ecclesiastical basis may be mentioned. By its aid the Egyptians and the Soudanese will be taught the language and philosophy of the English-speaking race, who are rapidly subduing the greater portions of the earth to the sway of reason. The missionary, with his God-given truths and man-made dogmas, is no longer the chief apostle of progress. The philosophy that will be taught in Lower Egypt will include the essential principles of the Christian system, simply as a section of the knowledge placed at the disposal of Pharaoh's descendants.

If the light of reason is to supplant the Deific outpourings vouchsafed in olden times, to whom shall we turn in the hours of tribulation, sorrow, and affliction for aid, comfort, and love? Many sincere believers in old-time revelation will ask this question. There is small need of misgivings on this head. The Supreme Being will be as near, and conceivably nearer, and as accessible by the avenues of prayer, as heretofore. A reign of reason will develop the virtues of tolerance, kindness, and charity, and love will be diffused through endless channels. Is not love the essence of wisdom? and would not a rule of broad knowledge promote sympathy and love?

Rule by reason would be government by God through the unfolded minds and faculties of men. On the apex of human achievements—lower and higher worlds included—man cognises, in an ever-increasing degree, the law-written lessons of the universe.

Spiritual leadership by man must not be confounded with the secular system of government hastily improvised by peoples in the throes of political revolutions. Just in proportion as man becomes God-like in knowledge by processes of reason and perception, is his leadership freed from the intervention of ready-made and specially-revealed laws from the Supreme.

Truth descends from highly-unfolded human spheres in the higher world, and its source is mediately human. Spiritualism enforces this truth by bringing into proximate unity the aims, plans, and principles of the earth's advanced minds, with the wisdom and harmony of the invisible majority.

AUTOMATIC WRITING.

SOME REMARKABLE MESSAGES.

'Psychische Studien' for May seems a particularly good number. Among other articles of interest is one entitled 'A Remarkable Case of Automatic Writing,' by M. Gordigiani, followed by some critical remarks thereon by Dr. Erich Bohn.

Signor Gordigiani gives an account of his own experiences, and of the way in which he became developed as a writing medium. In 1881 he was, at the age of fifteen, at the military school in Florence. When he returned home after his first year, he found his mother plunged in grief at the death of his eldest sister, and deeply interested in 'Spiritism,' of which he, however, knew nothing. His mother was not mediumistic herself, but one day it occurred to her to try if her son were, and she asked him to place his hands on a little table, without telling him why she wished him to do so. He complied, and the table immediately began moving across the room, and, to be brief, he eventually developed remarkable powers as a medium for automatic writing. He goes on to say that more than a hundred and fifty individuals, some of whom he had never even heard of, wrote through his hand, many of them in a dialect unknown to him—that of the thirteenth century Italian—describing events and mystic visions quite beyond his knowledge. The 'remarkable case' referred to was as follows:—

A well known American lady was sitting for her portrait to the writer's father, when it came out in conversation that the son was a writing medium. She begged so earnestly to be admitted to a séance, in the hope of getting a communication from her husband, who had died some years previously, that at last, after raising many objections—as they never liked to admit outsiders—the family consented, and they got a friend of the mother, who understood English, to join them and serve as interpreter. All they knew of Mrs. B. M.—the American lady—was that she had been in great grief at the loss of her husband and had been most anxious to fulfil his wishes with regard to the bringing up of the children, the division of his property, &c, and that she was satisfied she had done her best in these matters.

A sitting was arranged, and on the appointed evening at nine o'clock, there were present the father and mother of the writer; Madame P. (the interpreter); an advocate—a friend of the family; the medium; and Mrs. B. M., the American lady. I will give the account of the séance in the writer's own words:—

'I sat before a table with a pencil in my hand and a sheet of paper. In a few moments the pencil wrote the following words in French: "There is enmity between the lady and her husband which I cannot understand."

'My mother was much put out by these words, as we all believed that harmony existed between the pair, and again asked if it were not possible to get into rapport with the husband. But the inexorable pencil wrote over again the same sentence. Madame P. said that Mrs. B. M. insisted on knowing what was written, and it was translated for her. Never will any of us forget her emotion when, standing up and very pale, she exclaimed: "How—even yet!" She then explained in English that enmity had arisen between them, but that she thought death must have extinguished

his animosity, and that she had forgiven him and done all in her power to fulfil his last wishes.

'My mother tried again to obtain a more satisfactory communication, when the pencil wrote the following strange sentence: "It is impossible—he is in Nigritia." This time we all thought something must be wrong, and my mother wished to break off the sitting, and could not bear to repeat such nonsense to the lady. But Signor C., the advocate, insisted on trying to get to the bottom of the mystery. He asked: "What reason have you for saying he is in Nigritia?" The pencil wrote: "He is commissioned to work for the abolition of slavery."

"Why has he such a task?"

"Because he is a negro."

'My mother, who was very angry, and took no further interest in the séance, when she read this explanation, so insulting to the lady, seized the paper, crumpled it up and threw it, as she thought, unnoticed under the table.

'But Mrs. B. M. had seen it, and insisted on the paper being given to her. When she had received it she smoothed it out, and Madame P. translated the writing to her. In great emotion she rose up, hastily said "Good-night," and went away.

'We were dumbfounded. My mother exclaimed repeatedly: "This is the first time we have been treated so badly, for this last sentence must be some ill-timed joke, but the first was true, and Mrs. B. M. was greatly agitated by it."

'The next morning the lady sat again to my father for her portrait. He returned home to breakfast and burst out laughing, and then called out to my mother: "He *was* a negro, he *was* a negro!" We could not understand what he meant. He then told us that Mrs. B. M. had told him all her history. It seems that after her marriage her family discovered that her husband had coloured blood in his veins. It was scarcely perceptible, but for Americans this was a terrible *mésalliance*. From this arose the animosity between husband and wife, which lasted till the death of the former, but Mrs. B. M. hoped it had been appeased by death, as she had carried out all his last wishes.

(Signed) 'GORDIGIANI.'

'Psychische Studien' also publishes a 'ghost story.' The events recorded took place quite recently, in February last. The narrative is brief and interesting, and as dates, names, and addresses are given, and can be, I suppose, verified, I think it will be worth the trouble of translating, and I will, therefore, send it for another issue of 'LIGHT.'—M.T.

MULTIPLEX PERSONALITY AND SPIRIT OVERSHADOWING.

The report, contributed to 'LIGHT' of May 13th by Mr. Arthur Butcher, of Dr. Morton Prince's case of a patient who has three distinct personalities, calls up a very serious question as to the origin of these different phases of character manifesting in a single material body—a question which is far from being settled in the present state of psychical research.

In this particular case the patient exhibits, according to the stage of hypnotic trance, the following three personalities: (1) Reserved, conscientious, self-contained, serious, and dignified; (2) sad, serious, weary, suffering; (3) flippant, jovial, healthy, full of fun, reckless, contemptuous of state (1).

Dr. Morton Prince, like the recent French school and Mr. F. W. H. Myers, assumes that there is only one individual acting these different characters, and that the cause of the different conceptions of the personality is the coma of the induced trance. But they have not in the least proved their assumption. They assume it because in their limited experience of cases it seems the most natural.

But it seems to me that a further experience of the daily life of persons of mediumistic nature, who are constantly during the active day assuming different characters under the supposed influence or control of other personalities, may throw a further light on the subject and suggest the question whether the cases of multiplex personality brought about by hypnotisation are not often, if not always, caused by the control or overshadowing of other beings.

My own experiences are fast bringing me to a conclusion which may startle a mind that has given no thought to the subject, but which, nevertheless, may be the true scheme whereby Nature is working out the evolution of the human race.

My hypothesis is this: There is a greater solidarity between humans incarnated and humans disincarnated

than has yet been suspected; that humans incarnated are acting as a stock upon which all such humans as have prematurely become disincarnated are grafted, as it were, so that they can imbibe through our roots the earthly nourishment necessary to the full expansion of their unbudded natures; and finally, it may be in a few months, or it may be after long years, when they have attained the period of full fruitage they drop off and become separate individualities, free to select an environment of their own. These grafts are not simple parasites: they must be of a kindred genus or species to ourselves, in other words congenial; sometimes it may be congenital, that is, grafted on us before birth.

Every human being now on earth may in this way be the centre whence a number of disincarnated personalities are drawing in the nutriment which gives them character, or self-consciousness. The majority of us are ignorant of this being the case, because our 'congenial' associates never go so far as to suppress or entrance our consciousness, but simply affect our moods or spirits according as one personality or another emerges more or less to the front.

This would account for that strange variety of moods or dispositions which we can often discern in ourselves or in our familiar associates. But in abnormal cases, where by hypnotisation of either an earthly or an unseen operator, our normal consciousness is overshadowed or withdrawn, then one or other of these congenial ingrafted spirits emerges to earthly manifestation of their character.

I know a case of a highly mediumistic young girl which may illustrate this.

We will call her Lily. In her own normal character Lily is very like that of Dr. Prince's patient, very conscientious, serious, thoughtful, but physically so lazy that her mother has the greatest trouble to get her to help in any household duties or even to attend properly to her own personal duties, such as brushing her hair, &c. But for several hours each day she loses her normal consciousness and passes in rapid transitions under the control of a little dark-skinned girl whom we will call Lulu—a veritable child of nature just like personality No. 3 above, full of fun and wild physical spirits, ready for any physical exertion, willing to help the mother in any task, talking of Lily as the 'old girl' or 'the silly old thing.'

Dr. Prince, Dr. Charcot, and Mr. Myers will probably maintain that Lulu is only a sub-conscious stratum of Lily's personality, an impersonation assumed and acted like an actor's. But they have never satisfactorily accounted for the fact that all such cases persistently ignore each other's Egos, and assert themselves as separate personalities. Even Dr. Morton Prince, as represented by Mr. Butcher, is bound to admit that character 3 talks of character 1 as 'she,' not 'I.'

A further fact in the case of Lulu and Lily supports my view. When Lily sits in a circle for development of materialisation or physical phenomena she becomes more or less comatose, and then Lulu manifests a separate bodily presence to Lily, and has even shown to some very careful investigators her little hand to be black, while Lily's is white.

This fact I am afraid the other school are not prepared as yet to admit as established, but it is a fact nevertheless; and further experiments of investigators will soon compel all fair people to admit the existence of many parallel cases which will corroborate my statement of this fact and my view that what we call our own personality is grafted on with other human personalities or, to illustrate it by another simile, is like a thread made up of many interwoven and twisted strands of which our normal consciousness is but the fundamental one.

F. W. THURSTAN, M.A.

A KNOWLEDGE of the opinions of others may guide us in our researches so long as we cannot find the truth in ourselves, but such knowledge is as liable to mislead us as to lead us aright. The only key to arrive at the recognition and understanding of the truth is the perception and understanding itself. Opinions change, and creeds and beliefs change accordingly; but the knowledge that we find in our own conscience stands as firm as a rock. — FRANZ HARTMANN, M.D.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—'LIGHT' is kept on sale by W. H. Robinson, 4, Nelson-street, and Book Market.

BRITISH SPIRITUALISTS' LYCEUM UNION.

NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The ninth annual Conference of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union was held at Nottingham on Sunday last, having been preceded by a tea party and concert in the Cobden Hall on the Saturday afternoon and evening, at which an excellent programme of vocal and instrumental music, recitations, &c., was presented. There was a crowded audience.

The Conference was held in the Cobden Hall in the morning and afternoon of the Sunday. The chair was occupied by the President of the Union, Mr. John Venables, of Walsall, supported by Mrs. Jessie Greenwood, Past President, of Sowerby Bridge. Thirty-two Lyceums were represented by forty-nine delegates. District visitors from the Teeside, Tyneside, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and North-East Lancashire districts were also present.

The Conference was opened in due form with congregational singing, and an invocation delivered by Mr. H. Clark, of Leicester.

THE PRESIDENT then rose to bespeak the sympathies of those present for Mrs. M. J. Place, the well-known and highly-respected clairvoyante, whose husband had recently and suddenly passed into spirit-life, and after moving a vote of condolence, which Mr. S. S. Chiswell (Liverpool) feelingly seconded, the motion was unanimously passed by a silent, rising vote.

MR. J. J. MORSE next proposed that a letter of sympathy be sent to Mr. T. O. Todd, Sunderland, regretting that the state of his health prevented his being present, and expressing a cordial hope for his speedy complete recovery. This was seconded by Mr. William Johnson and unanimously carried.

The President's address, as circulated in printed form, was adopted as read. It gave a concise account of the visits that gentleman had made to the various Lyceums during his term of office.

The auditor's report was duly adopted. The income of the year from all sources was £180 17s. 7d., while the value of the stock in hand (*i.e.*, books in the publishing department) was returned at £57 6s. 8d.

The secretary's report stated that the number of Lyceums enrolled in the Union was 101, as compared with 89 last year. Non-Federated Lyceums stood at 19, an increase of 5 over last year. It appeared that 86 Lyceums had furnished the official statistical returns, which showed 856 officers and 4,386 members. The average for all Lyceums gave 1,196 officers and 6,120 members, making a grand total of 7,316 concerned in the work.

Various motions concerning the work of the Union were passed, and committees appointed to see to sundry matters, such as the destruction of the dies used for the Jubilee Lyceum Medal, the revision of the constitution, and several matters of minor importance.

Mr. J. J. Morse presented his report as the Conference representative at the Golden Jubilee Celebrations held last May in Rochester, U.S.A., and of the presentation of the illuminated address and silver medal voted to Andrew Jackson Davis, which he (Mr. Morse) was appointed to present to the venerable founder of the Lyceum movement.

Mr. S. S. Chiswell presented a supplementary statement on the foregoing report, detailing, in moving terms, the particulars of a visit he paid to Mr. A. J. Davis, and highly eulogising that gentleman's character. Each report was unanimously adopted.

Mr. W. Johnson presented the official series of 'Physical Exercises for Lyceums,' just issued by the Union's Publishing Committee.

The election of officers for the ensuing year included Mrs. Naylor (Middlesbrough) and Mr. A. Wilkinson (Nelson), to the executive; Mr. J. J. Bennett (Walsall) and Mr. Frank Chiswell (Liverpool) as auditors; Mr. Alfred Kitson, re-elected, as secretary; and on the motion of Mr. W. Harrison (Burnley), seconded by Mr. W. Hudson (Keighley), Mr. J. J. Morse (London) was unanimously and by acclamation elected President of the Union for the ensuing year.

It was by a large majority decided to accept the invitation from Newcastle-on-Tyne to hold the Conference for 1900 in that city.

The usual votes of thanks closed the formal business.

The proceedings of the day were closed by a public meeting in the large Mechanics' Hall, which was attended by about eight hundred people. The proceedings comprised vocal selections by the following professionals: The Misses Ada and Gladys Gates, Mr. George Cooper, and Mr. John Raynor. An organ recital on the grand organ was also given by Mr. George Astill, and numerous selections by the

Midland Railway Brass Band. Addresses were given by Mr. John Venables, the President, and Messrs. S. S. Chiswell, H. Clark, Alfred Kitson, and J. J. Morse. A series of very successful clairvoyant descriptions was given by Mrs. M. J. Place, of Leicester. The opening invocation was given by Mr. E. W. Wallis, and the closing benediction was pronounced by Mr. William Johnson.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

The Psychological Faculties of Children.

SIR,—Your correspondent 'Interested' puts two questions relating to the development of psychic faculties in children.

They point back to our earliest family experiences in Spiritualism (thirty years ago), and are fully recorded in the first four chapters of 'Spirit Workers in the Home Circle,' to which I would refer your correspondent. And permit me to add, more specifically to reply to his queries, that children should never be encouraged to *sit alone* for psychic development. Neither they, nor we, indeed, can always guard against the intrusion of idle or mischievous spirits; and the rule would be good, both for them and for all of us, not to *seek* anxiously for such development until it is made clear that we are *sought* and invited to such communion by the spirits themselves.

The detriment to physical well-being, to which 'Interested' refers, is seldom found in home circles; and children under proper home conditions may safely *there sit*, and indeed contribute happily to the development of all the circle.

The time of breaking up the home circle and going off to school is the critical one for the youngsters. It would be well to have an understanding with the spirit controller of the circle that a sensitive child should not be used *away* from home, and never controlled for trance except in the home circle; even then, if very sensitive, let the father's or mother's hand be needed to complete the *rapport*, and all will be well.

As a rule, the breaking up of family ties so disturbs the communications that they, for a while, cease.

To question one, then, the answer is that sensitive children are *not* usually able, alone, to guard against undesirable controls.

To question two, the reply is that there is no fear in properly constituted home-circles of any physical detriment accruing from children sitting *en séance*.

Long and late hours would naturally be avoided, and strangers excluded.

The questions really open up most interesting themes, relative to the proper persons to pursue psychic studies: but your space forbids my entering upon so interesting a discussion. I should, however, confirm all I have already said in another place.

MORELL THEOBALD.

Testing Mediums.

SIR,—I cordially agree with much of what Mr. J. F. Young said in 'LIGHT' of April 29th, as to the best method of tying mediums when sitting for physical manifestations. Certainly the use of tape is much preferable to, and far more secure than, that of ropes and cords. The methods suggested by Mr. Young are excellent—with one exception. It is *not safe* to put a band round a medium's throat as he recommends. In a case in which this course was adopted it came very near to being fatal, from the medium's head falling forward during trance, so that he was within a little of being completely choked. It is quite sufficient to apply the tape, in the way Mr. Young suggests, to the ankles, wrists, and waist—the tape round the waist, in the case of a male medium, being passed through a button-hole of his coat, and, in the case of a female medium, being stitched to the dress. All joinings made with ordinary white cotton or thread might have a stitch or two of coloured thread or silk passed through them—so that the joinings could not be separated without revealing the fact.

I know that some of our friends object to such testings on the ground that they give rise to a feeling on the part of the medium that he is regarded with suspicion. But surely this is a mistake. A medium who himself suggests, or at least cheerfully assents to a suggestion, that he should be safely secured to his seat, must know that he thereby disarms suspicion, and may calmly await events, in the confident assurance that the sitters must of necessity admit the genuineness of any phenomena that may occur; whilst in the absence of such conditions, no one could speak with the desired certainty. I am confident that, with tests kindly applied, the results would be in every way satisfactory, both to the medium and the sitters.

AJAX.